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GOVT DROPS 7-DAY QUARANTINE FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

They will no longer need to take an RT-PCR test on the eighth day of arrival as well, according to the latest guidelines

DOES AWAY WITH 'AT-RISK' DEMARCATION

Though mandatory seven-day home quarantine is no longer needed, international travellers will be asked to self-monitor their health for 14 days. The Centre has also done away with categorising certain countries as "at-risk". Travellers from countries that were deemed "at-risk" will no longer need to give RT-PCR test at the port of arrival | P3

RANDOM TESTING ON 2% OF VISITORS

- Two per cent of visitors from all countries will be tested for Covid-19 on a random basis. Those found to be symptomatic will immediately be isolated and taken to a medical facility
- Besides uploading a negative RT-PCR report, travellers from certain countries will be allowed to upload proof of vaccination

Feb 14

IS WHEN THE NEW RULES WILL COME INTO EFFECT

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

HC: Students must not insist on religious garb till case decided

Court to hear pleas on day-to-day basis from Monday; wants institutions to open soon

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court on Thursday orally said it restrains students and all stakeholders from insisting on wearing any religious garb — be it headscarf or saffron shawl — till the matters are decided. The court indicated that it would also pass an order on reopening of educational institutions, which have been ordered closed for three days by the state government after the hijab row spread across the state.

A full bench of Chief Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi, Justices Krishna S Dixit and JM Khazi noted that the court wants to restore peace and tranquility in the state. At the earliest, the education institutions should reopen and start imparting education to children, it orally observed.

All the issues before the court will be considered and it will be ensured that the children's education does not suffer. The endeavour of the court is that educational institutions should reopen without any disturbance, the court observed, adjourning the hearing to Monday. It was hearing a batch of petitions filed by students from Udupi district questioning the order passed by the state government on February 5, 2022 prescribing uniforms in schools and colleges.

The court indicated that it will hear the matter on a day-to-day basis from Monday and decide it at the earliest. Till then, people should not insist on wearing any religious garbs which are not conducive, the court added.

When senior advocate Devadatt Kamat, representing the petitioner-students, opposed the orders being passed only as indications, the court said, "You will have to cooperate and have faith in the court."

Advocate General Prabhuling K Navadagi argued that there is a government order that allows each educational institution to decide on uniforms and it wants students to return to colleges.

The police take out a route march to maintain peace after protests over the hijab controversy, in Davanagere on Thursday

Let HC decide, says apex court

New Delhi: A fresh plea was filed in the Supreme Court on Thursday on the hijab row, raising the issue of the right to practice religion as enshrined as a fundamental right in the Constitution.

Earlier in the day, the bench headed by Chief Justice of India N V Ramana had refused to entertain a petition by a college student stating that since the case is being heard in the high court, it won't be correct if a plea is entertained here. P9

Moderate turnout in UP poll Phase I

Voter turnout till 6 pm (subject to revision). In 2017, it was around 63.7%

STRAY VIOLENCE In Ghaziabad, a minor skirmish took place between supporters of BJP leader V K Singh and Congress leader Rajan Kant

58 constituencies held polls

2.28 crore eligible voters

623 candidates contested

Mishra gets bail

A single-judge bench of the Allahabad High Court granted bail to Ashish Mishra, the son of Union minister Ajay Mishra, who was arrested over the Lakhimpur Kheri violence that killed eight persons, including four farmers | P10

RBI expects inflation to dip, opts for more dovish policy

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

THE Reserve Bank of India on Thursday took a contrary bet on rising inflation, opting for a more dovish monetary policy stance than expected.

Contrary to the perception that inflation is a big risk, its policy statement pegged the 2022-23 inflation at 4.5%, 50 basis points lower than estimated. It retained the inflation estimate for 2021-22 at 5.3%.

Governor Shaktikanta Das said the lower inflation outlook was arrived at after detailed analysis of global crude prices. "Supply conditions for crude are expected to turn more favourable in 2022," he said.

Putting his money where his mouth is on inflation, he said: "It is a matter of our credibility. We won't give projections that are unrealistic."

The RBI's growth outlook for 2022-23 was, however, conservative at 7.8% against the Economic Survey's prediction of 8-8.5%. As for FY22, it retained growth at 9.2%.

The dovish policy dragged down the 10-year bond yield, as it closed at 6.72%, down almost 8 basis points from a day ago.

The central bank also kept the key policy rates unchanged. The reverse repo rate at which it drains liquidity from the system was retained at 3.35% much to the surprise of financial market stakeholders, who had penciled in a 20-25 bps hike.

Schools to reopen on Monday, no decision on colleges yet

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SCHOOLS will be reopened till Class 10 from Monday and the decision on resuming classes for college students will be taken later, said Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai here on Thursday.

The government had declared a three-day holiday for high schools and colleges after the hijab row took a violent turn on Tuesday.

After meeting Home Minister Araga Jnanendra, Primary and Secondary Education Minister BC Nagesh, Higher Education Minister Dr CN Ashwath Narayan and senior officers, Bommai said the Karnataka High Court order restrained students from wearing religious outfits to schools and colleges, and directed educational institutions to reopen.

The chief minister said there have been no untoward incidents over the last two days after colleges and schools were ordered shut. "Students should not pay heed to provocative statements and maintain peace," he said.

To ensure that schools and colleges are not disturbed once they reopen, Bommai is holding a meeting with deputy commissioners, zilla panchayat chief executive officers, police and education department officials via video-conferencing on Friday. P4

EXPRESS READ

Nehru could have freed Goa 'within hours': PM

Panaji: Launching an attack on the Congress, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said if Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wanted, Goa could have been liberated "within hours" in 1947 when India attained independence, but it took 15 years for the state to be freed from Portuguese rule.

SC orders reinstatement of woman judicial officer

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday ordered reinstatement of a former Madhya Pradesh woman judicial officer, who had resigned in 2014 following an inquiry into her allegations of sexual harassment against a high court judge.

WITH THIS ISSUE
CITY'S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE INDULGE
34 PAGES, INCLUDING 16 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

100 suspended BMTC employees reinstated

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

TRANSPORT Minister B Sriramulu on Thursday said employees of Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), who were suspended for staging protests and not reporting to duty in 2020 and 2021, will be reinstated if there are no criminal cases against them.

On Thursday, Sriramulu handed over appointment letters to 100 of them, while 700 more will be reinstated in the next one month.

At least 1,900 trainees and probationers of the state transport corporations, including 1,500 from BMTC, were suspended or dismissed for participating in the strike in December 2020 demanding that they be treated on par with state government employees. They had returned to work on government's assurance of considering their demands, but struck work again in April 2021, alleging that the state government had backtracked on its assurances.

Sriramulu told reporters that there are 1,353 applications from BMTC's suspended or dismissed staffers pending before him and so far 100 have been appointed. As and when cases are cleared by Lok Adalats, the employees would be reinstated, he added.

The employees who have criminal cases will not be taken back in any of the corporations, he clarified.

On recruiting more drivers and hiring private drivers to steer electric buses, Sriramulu said serving BMTC drivers will be assigned for electric buses too, and private drivers will not be taken in.

He said further recruitments will be made only after more buses are added to the BMTC fleet.

On buses catching fire and many in bad condition, he said that thorough checks are being conducted and that all buses, including those plying in North Karnataka, can run up to 10 lakh km without any problems. The vehicles are procured from manufacturers only on this condition, he added.

Centre appoints 16 judges to HCs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

THE Centre on Thursday appointed 16 judges to various high courts and elevated Justice Munishwar Nath Bhandari as the Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, as recommended by the Supreme Court collegium headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana. Justice Bhandari has been serving as Acting Chief Justice of the Madras High Court till now.

The Centre's approval of the collegium's recommendation for judges in three high courts included that of seven advocates as judges of the Andhra Pradesh High Court. As for Madhya Pradesh, three advocates and three judicial officers have been promoted to the high court.

PROMOTED

- **Madras HC Chief Justice:** Munishwar Nath Bhandari
- **Odisha HC judges:** V Narasingh, Biraja Prasanna Satapathy, Murahari Sri Raman
- **AP HC judges:** Konakanti Sreenivasa Reddy a.k.a Srinivasa Reddy, Gannamaneni Ramakrishna Prasad, Venkateswarlu Nimmagadda, Tarlada Rajasekhar Rao, Satti Subba Reddy, Ravi Cheemalapati, Vaddiboyana Sujatha
- **MP HC judges:** Maninder Singh Bhatti, Dwarka Dhish Bansal, Milind Ramesh Phadke, Amar Nath (Keshanwani), Prakash Chandra Gupta, Dinesh Kumar Paliwal

STATEWIDE PROTEST

ASHA workers threaten stir if budget allocation not made for salary

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE ASHA Workers' Union has threatened to launch a statewide agitation as they did last year if an allocation of Rs 12,000 per month is not made for them in the upcoming state budget.

The state government had made several promises earlier, but none were met, said ASHA workers, who served as frontline workers during the peak of Covid pandemic. The workers complained that they have been receiving incomplete and insufficient wages and incentives.

State Secretary of the ASHA Workers' Union D Nagalakshmi said, "We get Rs 4,000 from the state and we are supposed to get money from the Central government for carrying out certain tasks. Other health staff are supposed to fill in details of the tasks we have done onto the ASHA Nidhi software. But that is not done. The Centre then disburses incomplete incentive amounts to us. For instance, instead of getting Rs 6,000, a worker may get only Rs 3,000, despite completing all the incentive-based tasks. Owing to this uncertainty, the workers no longer want an honorarium, but a fixed salary."

Though on paper they may have fixed hours of work, they toil the entire day, they said.

They demanded the promised Rs 5,000 risk allowance. They sought Rs 500 per day for working overtime, while also pushing for fixed working hours and days. P2

GOLDEN HUE

A spotted deer, bathed in the evening glow of the sun, watches out for predators at the Nagarahole Tiger Reserve. For the first time, along with the ongoing tiger survey, the assessment of antelopes too is being undertaken in all tiger reserves | UDAYS HANKARS

NATIONWIDE	FEB 9	FEB 10
Fresh cases	71,365	67,084
Recoveries	1,72,211	1,67,882
Deaths	1,217	1,241

KARNATAKA	FEB 9	FEB 10
Fresh cases	5,339	5,019
Recoveries	16,749	13,923
Deaths	[illegible]	39

IAD-O-METER February 9
TAKE YOUR SHOT 33,61,099 doses
February 10
43,78,809 doses
TOTAL DOSES: 1,71,73,91,556

IN LIMBO

After 2,400 days of Mahadayi stir, no progress on project

RAGHOTTAM KOPPAR @Gadag

AS the state government has been demanding its rightful share of water in river-linking projects, which were announced in the recent Union Budget, the ongoing agitation at Naragund for implementing the Mahadayi river diversion project clocked 2,400 days on Thursday.

A group of protesters met Home Minister Araga Jnanendra in Bengaluru and demanded that the project be implemented at the earliest. They also wanted the minister to withdraw cases filed against agitators as promised by the government.

Since there was no mention of the Mahadayi project in the Union Budget, the protesters hoped that the issue would get priority in the state budget, which will be presented by Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai in March. All issues around the Mahadayi project should be resolved soon and the state government must go ahead with the project, they pleaded.

Karnataka Raita Sena state president Shankar Ambali said, "We will also meet the chief minister and talk about Mahadayi and other issues related to farmers of our region."

The Mahadayi protest was launched on July 16, 2015 by a group of farmers under the Karnataka Raita Sena banner, headed by Veeresh Sobaradmath. Farmers from near and far started joining the protest, which quickly spread to all towns that come under the Malaprabha river basin, including the twin cities of Hubballi and Dharwad. The agitation got support from all sections, including the Kannada film industry. P5